

**Amendment to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this Application.

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1. (Currently Amended)      An animal chew for chewing by an animal consisting of:

a body portion including an outer layer of elastomeric material having a first hardness on the Shore A scale of about 40A to 90A selected from the group consisting of natural rubber, polyurethane rubber, and thermoplastic elastomer, and a rigid supporting core at least partially covered by said outer elastomeric layer, said body portion having first and second end sections with an edge section thereof; and

first and second end pieces each ~~an end piece~~ including a raised ridge section and having a hardness on the Shore D scale of about 50D to 90D and engaging said outer layer of said body portion, wherein said raised ridge section of said first and second end pieces ~~end piece~~ overlies and protects said edge section of said body portion from contact with said animal during said chewing via said raised ridge section, wherein each of the ~~end piece~~ first and second end pieces includes an opening, wherein said body portion having first and second end sections is received in said opening and wherein said opening in said end piece defines a diameter **d<sub>1</sub>**, and said body portion having a first and second end section defines a diameter **d<sub>2</sub>** at said first and second end section, and **d<sub>1</sub> < d<sub>2</sub>**, wherein said body portion having a first and second end section with an edge thereof is engaged in said opening in said end ~~piece~~ pieces, and wherein said opening compresses upon said end section when said edge section is engaged with said opening

wherein said body portion or one of said end pieces optionally include protrusions.

Claims 2-7. (Cancelled)

Claim 8. (Original) The animal chew according to claim 1 wherein said first and second end pieces comprise a thermoplastic material.

Claim 9. (Original) The animal chew according to claim 8 wherein said first and second end pieces comprise a nylon material.

Claim 10. (Cancelled)

Claim 11. (Currently Amended) The animal chew according to claim ~~[[10]]~~ 1 wherein said core comprises a nylon material.

Claim 12-16. (Cancelled)

Claim 17. (Previously Presented) The animal chew of claim 1 wherein the entirety of said body portion including said outer layer is made of an elastomer material.